

USAID together with the Government of Nepal and DFID published the preliminary results of the 2009 Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Study. This study found that maternal mortality, one of USAID/Nepal's primary health intervention areas appears to continue to decline. It also showed that Nepal is on track to achieve the Millennium Development Goal for maternal health.

The current study is a follow-up of the 1998 Maternal Mortality and Morbidity study and had been in process for more than one year, with data collected from April 13, 2008 to April 12, 2009. The study shows that the maternal mortality ratio in eight study districts is 229 per 100,000 live births, ranging from 153 to 301 by districts. The study also demonstrates ethnic variations with higher rates among Muslims, Terai/Madhesi and Dalits, as well as geographic variations in maternal mortality.

Key findings of the report also show that maternal causes account for 11 percent of all deaths among women of reproductive age. Of the total maternal deaths, seven in ten were due to direct causes like hemorrhage, eclampsia and abortion-related complications and rest due to indirect causes like heart diseases, anemia, and gastroenteritis. Hemorrhage, although significantly reduced from 41 to 24 percent between 1998 and 2009, remains the leading cause of maternal deaths, followed by eclampsia (21 percent), a pregnancy related complication.